



Facts about the California High School Exit Examination (CAHSEE)

State law, enacted in 1999, authorized the development of the CAHSEE, which students in California public schools would have to pass to earn a high school diploma, beginning with the Class of 2004. The law also authorized the State Board of Education (SBE) on or before August 1, 2003, to delay the consequences of the CAHSEE (*California Education Code* sections 60850–60859). On July 9, 2003, the SBE announced that the consequences of the CAHSEE would be postponed for two years, making the Class of 2006 the first class now required to pass the CAHSEE to earn a high school diploma.

The purpose of the CAHSEE is (1) to improve student achievement in high school; and (2) to help ensure that students who graduate from high school can demonstrate competency in state academic content standards adopted by the SBE.

There are two parts to the CAHSEE: English-language arts and mathematics. By law, each part is to address state academic content standards adopted by the SBE.

Student Participation

- Beginning in the 2005–06 school year, students must satisfy the CAHSEE requirement in addition to meeting district and state requirements for graduation.
- Beginning with the Class of 2006, all tenth-grade students are required to take the CAHSEE once in grade ten in February or March, with a make-up in March or May. Students may be given up to five additional opportunities to retake the examination. Only the part(s) not passed must be taken again.
- Students who are English learners are required to take the CAHSEE in grade ten with all other tenth grade students. The school district may defer the requirement that these students pass the CAHSEE for up to 24 calendar months of enrollment in California public schools, but they still must take the CAHSEE during this period of time. The students must complete six months of instruction in reading, writing, and comprehension in English during these 24 months, but they still are required to take the CAHSEE during this time. All students must pass the CAHSEE in English to receive their high school diploma.
- Students with disabilities must meet the CAHSEE requirement to receive their high school diploma. These students must be permitted to take the test with any accommodation or modification specified in their Individualized Education Program (IEP) or Section 504 Plan for the CAHSEE, for standardized testing, or for use during classroom instruction and assessments.
- Students who take the CAHSEE with modifications will not receive a valid score and must complete a waiver to meet the CAHSEE requirement. At the request of a parent/guardian a school principal shall submit to the school district governing board a request for a waiver of the requirement to successfully pass the CAHSEE. This waiver is only available for a student with a disability who has taken the CAHSEE with modifications that alter what the test measures and has received the equivalent of a passing score on one or both parts of the CAHSEE. The school district board may waive the requirement to pass one or both parts of the CAHSEE if the student has met the requirements listed in *California Education Code* Section 60851(c).



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- Beginning with the 2000–01 school year, school districts are required to send notification about the CAHSEE to parents/guardians of grade nine students at the beginning of the first semester or quarter of the regular school term and each year thereafter. Transfer students are to receive notification at the time they transfer.

Test Content

- The English-language arts part of the CAHSEE addresses state academic content standards through grade ten. The examination consists of multiple-choice questions and a writing task. The reading and decoding portion covers vocabulary, informational reading, and literary reading. The writing portion covers writing strategies, applications, and conventions. The examination has one written response either to literature or an informational passage or to a writing prompt.
- The mathematics part of the CAHSEE addresses state academic content standards in grades six, seven, and Algebra I. It includes statistics, data analysis and probability, number sense, measurement and geometry, mathematical reasoning, and algebra. Students also must demonstrate strong computational skills and a foundation in arithmetic, including working with decimals, fractions, and percentages. The math examination consists of all multiple-choice questions.

Reporting/Using Results

- Within eight weeks after the CAHSEE administration, school districts are sent two copies of the Student and Parent Report for each student who took the examination.
- When districts receive individual student reports of the CAHSEE, they are to distribute one copy to parents/guardians and place the other copy in the student's permanent record.
- The passing score for the mathematics portion of the exam is approximately 55 percent of the questions correct or a scale score of 350. The passing score for the English-language arts portion of the exam is approximately 60 percent or a scale score of 350.
- The California Department of Education (CDE) posts school, district, county, and statewide results for the mathematics and English-language arts parts of the CAHSEE annually in late September or early October on the Internet.
- School districts must provide supplemental instruction aligned to the state academic content standards to assist students who do not pass the exam. This instruction is to include summer school for seniors who do not pass.

More Information

- Additional information about the CAHSEE is posted on the CDE Web site at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/statetests/cahsee>.